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Is Old Age Is A Disability: A Case Study Of Elderly People In Slum Areas Of Gulbarga City

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Abstract:

The present paper studied old age as a disability in everyone's life. For the purpose of present study, the authors have conducted a survey of slum areas of Gulbarga city through interview schedule. About 214 elderly people are interviewed consisting of 117 male and 97 female respondents. The study concentrated on the old age problems such as social problems, such as difference of opinions among family members, feeling of insecurity, loneliness, etc., economic problems, such as lack of adequate economic power and income and health problems such as health ailments and diseases from which the elderly people are suffering. The paper concluded with the remarks that old age is a kind of disability in every person's life.

KEYWORD:

Old Age, Elderly People, Disability, Gulbarga.

INTRODUCTION:

Ageing is a normal process; the aged should equip them to cope with it when it comes. Getting old is neither a social problem nor 'aged' is a problem creating group. The attitudes and structure of some societies impose upon the aged the status of being unwanted. 'Population Ageing' is a process by which the proportion of old people increasing more rapidly than the proportion in the other age segments. These changes happen mainly due to the decline in fertility and mortality. The demarcation of the aged from the rest of the population is generally by 60 or 65 years. Due to demographic changes, the proportion of aged persons is increasing through out the world. In India, about it is estimated that there is 77 million of the population is aged. The statistical sources revealed that in India, the grey population has doubled in 25 years.

Statistical Dimension of Senior Citizens (2001) (Age Care Forum: 2007):

77 Million elderly population (projected to 177 Million by 2025)
90 % with no Social Security
30% of older persons live below the poverty line
33% of older persons live just marginally over the poverty online
80% of older persons live in rural areas.
73% are illiterate, and can only be engaged in physical labor.
55% of elderly women are widows

· There are nearly 200,000 centenarians in India. Elderly population is the fastest growing section of society in India

Increased life expectancy

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Advancements in medical I health technologies
 Better nutrition
 Gradual fall in mortality rate
 Low fertility rates
 Increased awareness

Solution to this ever-growing chasm lies with the society and the support groups. The support groups define the gaps, the needs and views for future responses to abuse, care and prevention.

From 1901 to 2025: 12 million to 177 million

1901 - 12 Million elderly
 1951 - 19 Million elderly
 2001 - 77 Million elderly
 2025 - Projected 177 Million elderly

The old age people have their own problems. Such as ill health due to various old age ailments such as diabetes, rheumatics, feeling of insecurity, deafness, blindness, uncertain mental state, fear of being neglected in the society, etc. The distribution of various health problems are outlined in Table No.1 had no apparent illness in a study in a rural area of Tamil Nadu (Elango, 1998).

**Table on
 Health Problems of Elders**

Health problem	Age group (years)			Total
	60-64	65-69	70+	
Cataract	46	11	8	65 (32.18)
Asthma	8	5	3	16 (07.92)
Diabetes	12	5	2	19 (09.41)
Psychiatric illness	4	1	2	07 (03.47)
Musculoskeletal	11	6	5	22 (10.89)
Bronchitis	2	1	4	07 (03.47)
Hypertension	18	8	7	33 (16.34)
Stroke	2		6	10 (04.95)
Dental problems	9	8	13	30 (14.85)
Others	9	4	6	18 (08.91)
Total	120	51	56	227

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Further, it is also noted that majority of these people are facing problem of lack of family support systems such as neglected by their children and alienated from their sons and daughters. Such factors made the old aged people to feel the disabled. Of course, the Central Government and State Governments executed the programmes for such kind of people such as Mobile Medicare units, Day Care Centres, Old Age homes, Special Old age pension, etc. Present study is conducted to know about the problems of the old aged people living in slum areas of the Gulbarga city. A few of the old aged people interviewed in the present study, shared their experiences, expressed their views and as observed their life, it is generalized from these studies that old age is a disability, which comes in the life of every man! woman after the age of 65 years or so. The observations, views and expressions of the old aged people are presented in the following sections. Karnataka State Policy for Senior Citizens

The Karnataka State Policy for Senior Citizens has come into force on 5-9-2003 as per Govt. order No. WCD/314/SJD/2003. A task force committee headed by Chief Minister is formed to implement the policy (Karnataka, 2003).

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY:

The goal of the State Policy is to maintain the well being of the older persons.

The state shall extend support for financial security, health care, shelter, welfare and other needs of older persons provide protection against abuse and exploitation.

- Programme should be drawn for the older persons living in rural areas to ensure that they should be provided with equal opportunities as prevailing in urban areas

- The Senior citizens shall be provided with the opportunities to run active, creative, productive and satisfying life.

- The policy aims at having an age-integrated society.

- The State recognizes that elderly persons are also resourceful and render useful services to the family and the society.

- The policy recognizes the importance of proper budgetary allocation for the welfare of poor elderly persons.

The policy envisages the following sectors.

1. Health
2. Welfare
3. Financial Security
4. Housing and Shelter
5. Protection of life and property
6. Other areas of action
7. Implementation.

GULBARGA CITY: SLUM AREAS

Gulbarga is 613 km north of Bangalore is the district headquarters of Gulbarga. Gulbarga is a Divisional Head Quarters for the five Districts viz., Bidar, Bellary, Koppal, Raichur, and Gulbarga. It is a Major District and VI big City of Karnataka, and is major trade centre and Administrative centre of Hyderabad-Karnataka region. Gulbarga qualifies as a medium sized city in its size and population. The city accommodated about 4.30 lakhs of population spread over 64.7 sq.kms. There is general fact that to a major extent the illiterate or under-educated, physical labour-oriented people are living in slum areas, majority of these slum population is living below poverty line. As such there are social problems such as destituted and orphaned children, beggary, neglected old age people, low status of women etc. are prevailing in slum areas. These people always think that life is a curse for them, as these people have to live on their daily work. The present study is a survey of old aged people above 60 years of age, living in slum areas on different issues concerning to their problems. Survey of Elderly Population in Slum Areas in Gulbarga City:

As discussed already, the elderly people have their own problems and may be classified as socio-economic, psychological, medical, etc. Especially majority of the elderly population is suffering from different kinds of health ailments, due to which, many of the elderly people feels that the old age is a curse or disability. As present study is based on survey there are about 214 elderly people living in slum areas of Gulbarga city were interviewed. Of the total respondents, 117 were males and 97 were female respondents. Further, of these respondents about 88 were retired government employees. The study examined the different aspects of these elderly people as under:

1. Age of the Respondents:

Age of the respondents is essentially needed while ascertaining different aspects of elderly people. The age of the respondents covered under the study is stated as under:

Table No. 1. Age of the Respondents:

Age	Male		Female		Total	
58-70 years	49	41.88	36	37.11	85	39.72
71-80 Years	38	32.48	28	28.87	66	30.84
81-90 Years	17	14.53	21	21.65	38	17.76
91-100 Years	13	11.11	12	12.37	25	11.68
Above 100 Years	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	117	54.67	97	45.33	214	100

2. Family Income of the Respondents:

The income and wealth of the elderly refers to feeling of security in their life. High income status refers to there is more feeling of security and comfortable life and vice versa. The monthly income of the respondents is stated as under:

Table No. 2. Family Income Level of Respondents:

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Below Rs. 5000	97	45.33
Rs. 5001 to Rs. 8000	76	35.51
Rs. 8001 to Rs. 10000	25	11.68
Rs. 10001 to Rs. 15000	09	4.21
Above Rs. 15000	07	3.27
Total	214	100

3. NATURE OF THE FAMILY:

The nature of the family such as joint or single family decides the social status of the elderly people. It is noted that in the joint family the elders have more respect and elders have also responsibility of leading the family. The nature of the family of the respondents presented in the following table:

Table No. 3. Nature of the family:

Nature of the Family	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Joint Family	82	38.32
Single/ Nuclear Family	132	61.68
Total	214	100

4. Care and Respect in the Family:

It was asked to the respondents, whether they are getting adequate care and respected by the family members such as brothers, sisters, wife! husband. Sons, daughters, daughter-in-laws, grand children, etc. Further, the level of the care and respect is also ascertained by mentioning extent of care and respect in their family. The responses of the elderly people are presented in the following table:

Table No. 4. Care and Respect in the Family:

Level of Care and Respect in the Family	Number of Respondents	Percentage
High	25	11.68
Greater	44	20.56
Satisfactory	47	21.96
Not-Satisfactory	98	45.79
Total	214	100

5. Difference of Opinion with the Younger Family Members:

It was asked to the respondents whether there are any kinds of differences of opinions of elderly people with the younger family members. It is needed to know about the differences of ideas of the elderly people with the younger generation. The following table disclosed the responses of the elderly people:

Table No. 5. Difference of Opinions with the Younger Family Members:

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Regular	88	41.12
Occasional	91	42.52
Never	35	16.36
Total	214	100

6. Family Problems and Concerns:

It was asked to the elders, what are problems, which made them worry about their solution. They include the daughters' marriage, son/daughter's employment, children education, increase in loans, Health Problems, etc. The responses of the elders are presented as under:

Table No. 6. Family Problems and Concerns:

Kinds of Family Problems/Worries	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Increase in Loans	81	37.85
Daughters' Marriage	64	29.91
Children's Employment	91	42.52
Health Problems	186	86.92
Any Others	51	23.83
Total	214	100

7. Mental Depression and Feeling of insecurity:

It was asked to the respondents that whether they are feeling unsecured and depressed. The different studies revealed that due to different problems such as ill health, ill treatment from the family members, more responsibilities and lack of adequate income and economic power, the elderly people are suffering from depression and feeling of insecurity. The responses of the elders covered under the study are presented as under: Table No. 7. Whether Mentally Depressed and feeling unsecured:

Table No. 7. Whether Mentally Depressed and feeling unsecured:

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	147	68.69
No	67	31.31
Total	214	100

8. Health Problems of the elders:

It is noted that most of the elders covered under the study, are suffering from different kinds of problems. Of which, major problems are card jo-vascular problems. Diabetes, Asthma, Ophthalmologic Problems. Psychiatric Problems. Dental Problems. Cancer etc. The collected data revealed that a few of the elderly people are suffering from more than one health ailment. The collected data presented in the following table:

Table No. 8. Health Problems of the Elders:

Health Problems	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Cardio-Vascular Problems	39	18.22
Diabetes	114	53.27
Asthma	92	42.99
Ophthalmologic Problems	67	31.31
Cancer	14	6.54
Psychiatric Problems	103	48.13
Dental Problems	88	41.12
Others	43	20.09
None	28	13.08
Total	214	100

9. Old Age is a Disability of every Human Being:

It is noted that due to lack of care by the family members, worries, lack of work, health problems, mental depression, etc. the elders are suffering from being state of disability. They can't able to be active to work, because of health problems, they can't able to lead the family, because they have no adequate work and adequate income, feeling of insecurity due to the loneliness (more incase of widows/widowers), and so on. Hence, majority of the elders treat the old age is a disability in every human being's life. The researcher asked a question, whether the old age is a disability of every human being and the collected responses are shown as under:

Table No. 9. Old Age is a Disability:

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Agree to the Full Extent	122	57.01
Agree to a Greater extent	49	22.90
Do not Agree	43	20.09
Total	214	100

SUMMARIES OF FINDINGS:

· The study covered about 117 male and 97 female elderly people to examine their health problems, psychological problems, family problems and disability. The respondents are of age between 58 to 100 Years of Age.

· The study revealed that only 38.32% of the elders are living in joint family and the remaining 61.68% are living in Single and Nuclear Family.

· It is noted that a major portion of the respondents that is 45.79% of the elders covered under the study are not getting adequate care and respect in their families.

· About 41.12% of the elders are facing differences of opinions regularly with youngsters such as sons, daughter-in-laws, etc. Further, there are differences of opinion with the youngsters occasionally as stated by 42.52% of the elders.

· In their old age the respondents are suffering from different social and economical problems. They are increase in loans (37.85%), daughters' marriage (29.91%), Children's employment (42.52%), Health Problems (86.92%) and such other problems (23.83%).

· It is interesting to note that majority that is 68.69% of the respondents stated that they are mentally depressed and feel unsecured.

· It is surprising to note that only 13.08% of the respondents are having good health. The remaining respondents are suffering from different health problems and a few of them are suffering from more than one health problem. Particularly, among the common diseases from the elderly people are suffering are Diabetes (53.27%), Psychiatric Problems (48.13%), Asthma (42.99%), Dental Problems (41.12%), Ophthalmologic Problems (31.31%), other problems (20.09%) and Cardio-Vascular Problems (18.22%) respectively.

· As the old age people are suffering from different problems mentioned above. even though the old age is not a disability, many of the elderly people feel that the old age is a kind of disability. The study revealed that about 57.01% of the respondents fully agree that old age is a kind of disability, about 22.90% of the respondents to a greater extent agree that the old age is a disability and only 20.09% of the respondents do not agree to the same.

CONCLUSION:

Of course, old is not disability, but majority of the old aged people approving that old age is a kind of disability. It is noted from the present study that majority of the elders living in slum areas of Gulbarga city are suffering from health problems. For this purpose, there is need to extend free medical facilities to them. Of course social problems of the elders cannot be solved, but they can be reduced by the counseling and family guidance. The social workers and Non-Government Organizations should come forward to solve the social problems of the elderly people. The economic problems of the elderly people should be solved only by the Government, by assuring universal schemes such as old age pensions, etc. By analyzing the problems of the elderly people as discussed above, it can be said that the old age is a kind of disability in every person's life, which cannot be avoided.

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